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SHEKEL



The Journal of Israel and Jewish History and Numismatics
Volume 48 No. 2 April May June 2015

Anti-Semitic Medals



through history Part II



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Mel Wacks, President and Editor-in-Chief
Contact Mel via E-mail: ainapresident@gmail.com

or call him: (818) 225-1348

Josh Prottas, Vice-President

Donna Sims, Treasurer

Roger Merritt, Secretary

GENERAL CONTACT

Donna Sims, P.O. Box 20255, Fountain Hills, AZ 85269

E-mail: dancinazdonna@gmail.com

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Andrew Perala, PO Box 6626, Kamuela, HI 96743

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ANDREW PERALA, EDITOR

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Number One Money Man Judaica

Denmark Ag



High relief silver medal (45 grams - 40mm) commemorates 50th anniversary of Danish Jewish community escape from the clutches of Germans. Created by Danish artist, engraver and medalist Bent Jensen, this piece features a reverse of Holger Danske, a national hero, and an obverse with Jews between the maps of Denmark and Sweden.

Houghton

Works of Art from Houghton Jews - Hardcover Christie's London, 8 December 1994. Edition provides extensive information about Philip & Sybil Sassoon and their magnificent holdings. 361pp; near perfect condition; no folds, notations or markings. Unopened.

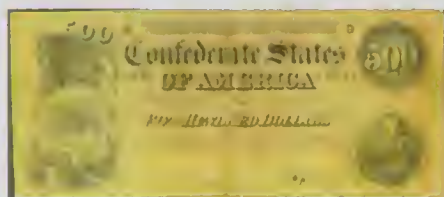


Herzl Passport

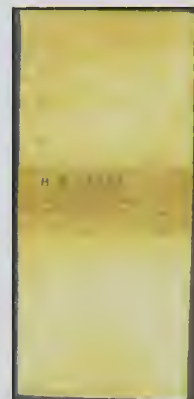


1850 Franz Joseph I official passport for Israel Herzl (24x40 cm). Sealed with signed revenue stamp, dated 1850. In 1815, Austria emerged from Napoleonic Wars as a powerhouse; the Hapsburgs returned to rule. This single-page passport (Reise-Pass) bears all information about Israel Herzl, including name, character, birthplace, birth year, religion, stature, hair color etc. All signed by the Gov. & General Commander of the Serbian region of Timis, western Romania and Banate, Southern Hungary. Finely printed in large format (about 9x16 inches) in blue with a decorative border. Document dated 1850, sealed with signed revenue stamp. Theodore (Tivadar/Binyamin Ze'ev) Herzl was born in Pest (the other side of Buda - Hungary), his family had come from Zemun (present day Serbia, by Belgrade on the Danube). But Herzl was a common name, so it could be a relative or not.

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A.I.N.A. AT ANA 2015 - DON'T MISS IT!



First, I want to remind you that AINA members and the general public are invited to our annual AINA meeting held in conjunction with the American Numismatic Association's World's Fair of Money. The meeting will feature Simcha Kuritzky's fascinating talk on Pidyon Haben (redemption of the first born male) tokens and coins (some shown above), and the latest news from a representative of the Israel Coins & Medals Corporation. The AINA meeting and ANA convention will be held at the Donald Stephens Convention Center (near Chicago) on Thursday, August 13 from 1-3. I hope to see you there, and also please stop by AINA's table in the bourse area, from August 11-15, and say "hello."

Next, I ask you to help promote AINA by giving memberships as bar/bat mitzvah gifts, birthday and graduation gifts, and gifts to anyone from 10-90. They will think of you every time they receive an issue of *The Shekel*—and they will enjoy

reading *The Shekel* from cover to cover as do most of our members.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last but not least, please think of our dealer/auction advertisers whenever you are interested in adding to or selling your collection. I know all of them personally and am happy to give them the highest of recommendations.

And we are happy to inform you about other numismatic publications and organizations that you might be interested in. Whenever you contact one of our advertisers please say that you read about them in *The Shekel*.

If you ever have any comments, suggestions or questions please contact me.

Wishing you all the best,

Mel

ANTI-SEMITIC BIGOTRY

AS CHRONICLED BY HISTORICAL MEDALS



BY BENJAMIN WEISS

PART II

BIGOT: *A person who is obstinately or intolerantly devoted to his or her own opinions and prejudices; especially one who regards or treats the members of a group (as a racial or ethnic group) with hatred and intolerance. Merriam-Webster.com 2013*

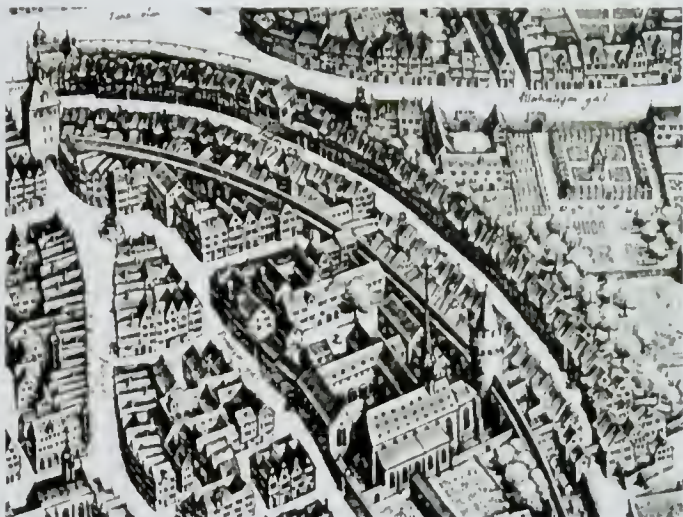
An inscription on the edge (not seen) of the Shabbatai Tzvi medal (above) *TEMPVS PRAESENS ESAV / FVTVRVM JACOB*, (Present Time Esau, Future Jacob) refers to the biblical story of Esau and Jacob, twin brothers of Isaac and Rebecca, who competed for the inheritance of their father. According to *Genesis 25*, Jacob, the younger of the twins, tricked his blind father into blessing him with his inheritance, leading to conflicts between the brothers.

Ultimately, Esau married two Hittite women in violation of

Abraham's injunction not to take wives from among the Canaanite population, forever ruling out Esau as the bearer of patriarchal continuity. Jacob received Isaac's blessing and, with his name changed to *Israel*, is declared Isaac's legitimate heir in the continued founding of the Jewish people. Thus, with this inscription, Wermuth alludes to the ephemeral nature of some religions, as Jacob is considered to be one of the patriarchs of the Israelites, while his brother Esau is considered the progenitor of the Edomites, a

Continued

*The Judengasse (Jew's Alley)
Frankfurt city map of 1628, showing
the curved Judengasse (from
Jüdisches Kulturmuseum).*



Continued

group which after a time disappeared from history.

OTHER MEDALS RELATED TO THE SUBJUGATION OF JEWS

As mentioned earlier, anti-Semitic acts may be divided into different stages: Slurs, insults and humiliations; forced conversions; physical punishments; confinement to ghettos; mass expulsion and relocation; and mass slaughter. Commemorative and historical medals exist which dramatize each of these types of acts. Some of these have already been discussed. What follows is a discussion of medals related to the confinement of Jews to ghettos, their expulsion from their homelands and their slaughter during the Holocaust in the period of Nazi Germany.

Medals Related to Regulating the Movement of Jews: Ghettos and Expulsion

The mass relocation of Jews has taken place in virtually every country in Europe for hundreds of years. The first step generally was

to confine Jews to specific areas of a city, the Ghetto, the word originating from the name of the Jewish quarter in Venice, established in 1516, where the Venetian authorities compelled the city's Jews to live.

By the 16th and 17th centuries, dozens of Jewish ghettos existed not only throughout Europe, but in Africa and Asia as well. Some of the more well-known include the Roman Ghetto, created in 1555 by Pope Paul IV. It confined the Jews of Rome to live in a four-block area near the Tiber River, a section of the city that was subject to regular flooding. In Venice, Jews were locked up at night behind gates in a small section of the city. This Ghetto was abolished after the fall of the Republic of Venice to Napoleon. During World War II the Germans established over 1000 ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union.

The most infamous of these Jewish Ghettos was the Warsaw Ghetto, the largest ghetto in all of Nazi occupied Europe, with more than 400,000 Jews crammed into an

Continued

Continued

area of about one square mile. The segregation of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe, however, was predated by several centuries by a prominent ghetto in Frankfurt Am Main, Germany. This ghetto, shown in a map printed in 1628

and illustrated on the previous page, was known as the *Judengasse* (Jews' Alley).

The Frankfurter *Judengasse* (from German: "Jews' Alley") was one of the earliest Jewish ghettos in Germany. It existed for more than three hundred years, from 1462 until 1796, and was home to Germany's largest Jewish community in early modern times. It was located outside the city walls in the East End of the city of Frankfurt and had three town gates, which were locked at night and on Sundays and (Christian) holidays. When the gates were closed, the Jewish population was essentially locked in.

In 1711, one of the largest fires that ever occurred in Frankfurt broke out in the *Judengasse*. The fire started in Rabbi Naphtali's house, which was located directly opposite to the synagogue. Strong winds and the density of the build-

ings spread the fire, causing it to race through the ghetto.

As the gates to the ghetto were locked, the Jews were trapped inside. The neighboring Christians finally allowed the Jews to flee the burning ghetto and helped extinguish it when it appeared

that the fire, if not contained, would spread to the Gunpowder Magazine and other buildings in the Christian sections of the city. The residents were unable to save the Ghetto, and within 24 hours several people had died in the fire, almost every

house was burned to the ground and many treasures were lost, including books, manuscripts and Torah scrolls.

After the disaster the inhabitants of the lane were allowed to rent houses in the Christian areas of Frankfurt until their homes were rebuilt. Those who couldn't afford the rent were forced to search for homes in Jewish communities in surrounding communities. Jews who had lived in the Ghetto without permission were expelled.

Significantly, a medal issued in 1711, apparently celebrating (!) the event (shown on the next page),

‘ONE OF THE
LARGEST FIRES IN
THE HISTORY OF
FRANKFURT WAS
DELIBERATELY SET
IN 1711 BY ANTI-
SEMITES IN THE
JUDENGASSE.

Continued



Memorial of the Ghetto Fire in Frankfurt Am Main by Christian Wermuth, Germany, 1711, Silver struck medal, 44 mm. Friedenberp p.15; Kirschner 33.

Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht.

Continued

this by the virulent anti-Semite Christian Wermuth, who had previously made several other anti-Semitic medals. On one side can be seen a long Latin legend, translated as, “Oh, Miraculous Nonetheless Wretched Event! Alas for That Fortunate Day, When at Frankfurt Am Main, the Street (i.e., the Judengasse Ghetto) of the Jews Was Destroyed by Fire, Rabbi Naphtali from Poland Being the Cause, and over a Twenty-four Hour Period Burned to the Ground, Though the Store of Gunpowder Was Safe and All the Houses of Christians Were Unharmd. Which Street Now Rises Again from the Rubble on the 23rd Day of March, Now That the Foundation of the Synagogue Has Been Rebuilt.”

As if this weren’t enough, Wermuth added on the rim of the medal a quotation from Symphonius,

“It Pleased the Gods for the Jew to Be Thrown into the Flames,” a harbinger of the horrors to come to the Jews in Nazi Germany.

In his outstanding book on Jewish Medals, Daniel Friedenberp attributed this quotation, incorrectly, to Plato. The word “Symposi” in the legend was assumed to refer to Plato’s work called *The Symposium*, but “Symposi” refers to the author of late antiquity Symphonius (as his name is usually spelled now, though Symposius actually is more correct). He wrote short riddles in Latin, and this quotation refers to Riddle 47, where the solution to the riddle is “incense” (“tur” in Latin). Perhaps Wermuth meant for the reader to replace in his mind the word “tur” with something like “Jude,” that is, “It pleased the gods for the Jew (rather than incense) to be thrown

Continued



Albert (Albrecht) III der Fromme, Duke of Bavaria-Munich by Franz Andreas Schega: Germany, c.1766-1770, Silver struck medal, 39 mm. Ref: Forrer V, 377 no. 9; Weiss BW807.

Image: Collection of Benjamin Weiss

Continued

into the flames.” (Ralph Rosen, personal communication).

On the other side of the medal can be seen a father, mother and two children, hands outstretched in lament. Behind them the flames of the fire are destroying the buildings, while untouched is the gunpowder magazine. The legend reads: AND INDEED A GOOD THING THAT IN SUCH A MANNER IS PROVOKED. Wermuth evidently being pleased with the outcome.

The fire in the Frankfort Ghetto was of such historical importance that the Jewish community of Frankfurt annually remembers its anniversary with a period of penance and fasting.

In spite of this fire and its disastrous consequences, Frankfurt continued to confine the Jews, being one of the last cities in Europe to allow them freedom of movement. In 1769, when the Jews petitioned

the Frankfurt city council to leave the ghetto on Sunday afternoons, the council responded by stating their request was “... *an example of the unbounded arrogance of this people, who expend every effort to take all opportunities to set themselves up as equals to the Christian citizens.*”

MEDALS RELATED TO THE EXPULSION OF JEWS

Some of the events associated with expelling Jews from countries were of such significance that they were commemorated in medals issued centuries after their expulsion. One such medal is that of Albert (Albrecht) III, which was engraved in the eighteenth century by the renowned medalist Franz Schega as part of a series of 17 portrait medals of Bavarian rulers (shown above).

These medals had images of the

Continued



Repeal of Edict Expelling Jews from Prague by N. van Swinderen, Holy Roman Empire, Silver struck medal, 1745. 65 mm. (Van Loon 205). Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht.

Continued

rulers on the obverse and a legend highlighting their major accomplishments on the reverse. As can be seen, although this medal was issued some three hundred years after the death of Albert III, Scheega chose to feature on the reverse the fact that under Albert's leadership the Jews (and pirates) were driven out of Bohemia, the legend reading, as translated: "Born in 1396, Overseer of the Public Peace, Once the Throne of Bohemia Was Overthrown and the Jews and Pirates Were Driven out under His Leadership. 1460."

This expulsion occurred between 1432 and 1442, during which time, with the instigation of the clergy, Duke Albert III succeeded in having all the Jews of Upper and Lower Bavaria expelled. The Jews continued to be excluded from Bavaria and Munich for almost three

centuries thereafter.

At that point, in the eighteenth century, during the Austrian occupation, the Jews were permitted to return only to be periodically persecuted and expelled again until more recently, during the Nazi period of the 1930s and 1940s, when most of these "terrestrial demons," as the Nazis called them, were either expelled, forced into labor camps or systematically gathered up *en masse* and murdered, acts in which, according to a detailed study by Daniel Goldhagen (1996), the general population in Germany and its occupied countries were willing participants and that "In their eyes, der Jude is not merely a heinous capital criminal. He is a terrestrial demon."

One might conclude that the demonical Jew espoused by Nazi Germany is not so unlike the demonical "Jude" depicted in the

Continued

Continued

anti-Semitic medals shown here that were minted centuries ago.

A medal (shown on previous page) which stands in stark contrast to that commemorating the expulsion of Jews was issued in the Netherlands; namely, one that celebrates the repeal of the edict expelling Jews from Prague. Based on the trumped-up charge that the Jews were collaborating with foreigners, in 1744, Empress Maria Theresa of Austria expelled all the Jews from Prague and the rest of Bohemia. Protests from several countries convinced the Empress to revoke the edict. This medal celebrates the successful intervention of the Jewish communities of Europe against the expulsion edict issued by Maria Theresa.

The obverse shows the Empress sitting on her throne, with figures of Love and Justice on either side. She is shown handing down the repeal of the edict expelling Jews from Prague. A warrior pleads the cause of a rabbi standing behind. The Latin legend may be translated as "Exile Threatened"; below is a variation of the quotation from *1 Samuel 22:15*, "May the Queen not suspect her loyal subjects of such things in such a way," referring to the false accusation that the Jews had betrayed Prague to the Prussians.

The reverse shows the temple of Jerusalem with the symbolic burn-

ing of the original Edict of Expulsion of Jews from Prague. Coats of arms adorn the facade in honor of the countries protesting the edict. The legend (translated) reads: "Decree Revoked" and a rephrase of the quotation from *Esther 9:28* "These are the days that should be remembered by all generations in every country throughout the world." (From Friedenberg).

A related medal, in this case celebrating the revocation of an edict expelling Jews from England, is discussed below.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ENGLAND

Although the majority of religious oppression of Jews occurred in continental Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe and Russia (although France, Spain and Portugal certainly cannot be excluded), there is ample evidence of its prevalence in England.

Indeed, the history of religious persecution in England goes back centuries, beginning soon after 1066, when William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings and took over the crown of England. Just a little over one hundred years later anti-Semitism was already widespread.

On a number of occasions riots were sparked in which many Jews were murdered, most famously during the crusades of 1189 and 1190 when hundreds of Jews were massacred in the cities of York and

Continued

Continued
London.

The situation only got worse for Jews as the 13th century progressed. In 1218, England became one of the first European nation to require Jews to wear a marking badge, predating by more than seven centuries the practice forced upon the Jews of Germany by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime.

In both Christian and Islamic countries, persons not of the dominant religion were intermittently compelled by sumptuary laws to wear badges, hats, bells or other items of clothing that distinguished them from members of the dominant religious group. This stricture applied particularly to Jews, for not only Christians but also Muslims required Jews to wear distinguishing marks and clothing. A genizah document of 1121 describes decrees in Baghdad forcing Jews to wear: “... two yellow badges, one on the headgear and one on the neck. Furthermore, each Jew must hang round his neck a piece of lead ... He also has to wear a belt round his waist. The women have to wear one red and one black shoe and have a small bell on their necks or shoes ...” (Johnson).

In 1274, Edward I of England enacted the Statute of Jewry, which also included a requirement:

“Each Jew, after he is seven years old, shall wear a distinguishing mark on his outer garment,

that is to say, in the form of two Tables joined, of yellow felt of the length of six inches and of the breadth of three inches.” (*A Day in the Life of 13th Century England*; BBC).

The wearing of a yellow badge that was compulsory for Jews in some parts of Europe in the Middle Ages was revived in Germany by the Nazis during the Second World War (see section on Medals Related to the Holocaust).

The persecution of Jews in England culminated in 1290, when Edward I issued an edict ordering the entire population of the English Jews expelled from the country (Endnote 1). All their property was seized by the crown and all outstanding debts payable to Jews were transferred to the King’s name. The expulsion edict remained in force for the rest of the Middle Ages; Jews as a group were not allowed to formally return to England again until almost 400 years later, in 1656, during the Commonwealth period of Oliver Cromwell.

English laws restricting the activity of Jews continued, however, until fairly modern times as it was not until late in the 19th century that statutes preventing Jews from even serving in Parliament were rescinded and English Jews received formal emancipation.

The act by Oliver Cromwell in 1656 to allow Jews to resettle in England was of such importance

Continued



Resettlement of Jews in Great Britain, Tercentenary by Paul Vincze, England, 1956, Bronze struck medal, 38 mm. Eimer 2097; BHM 4467. Image courtesy Christopher Eimer

Continued

that three centuries later a medal was issued in England commemorating the three hundredth anniversary of this historic event (shown above).

The obverse of the medal shows busts of Oliver Cromwell and Menasseh ben Israel, a Dutch rabbi who successfully petitioned Cromwell to rescind the expulsion of the Jews; a menorah below. The reverse depicts a woman reading a scroll reading 1656 b 1956 and holding a plaque reading, in Hebrew, *Thou Shalt Know That Thy Tent Is in Peace*, Job. V. 24.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN FRANCE

Anti-Semitism in France, like that in other countries in Europe, goes back centuries, and, like that elsewhere, usually took various forms, including stereotyping Jews, segregation, and expulsion of Jews from cities and even

from the country as a whole. The most notable expulsions of Jews that occurred in the 12th through 14th centuries were from Paris by Philip Augustus in 1182, and from the whole of France by Louis IX in 1254, by Charles IV in 1306, by Charles V in 1322 and by Charles VI in 1394. In the 19th century the Jews were blamed for the defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). During World War II, some 75,000 French Jews, including about 11,000 children, were sent to Nazi death camps.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, anti-Jewish acts in France were often excused by the antagonism many French citizens had (particularly those among the Muslim community), regarding the disputes between the Palestinians and Israel.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century alone, thousands of anti-Semitic actions and threats

Continued



Propaganda Medal in Support of an Anti-Jewish Alliance in France. By unknown artist, France, ca. 1890, silvered bronze struck medal with suspension loop, 31 mm.

Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht

Continued

were recorded in France; the murder of several people at a Jewish supermarket in Paris in January, 2015, being one example of many.

Many equated attacks against Jews and destruction of Jewish property and synagogues in France as a statement against the policies of Israel. This may be viewed as analogous to attacking Catholics or destroying Catholic Churches in France as a protest against the policies of the Vatican state which, thankfully, does not occur.

Shown above is a medal issued in France about 1890 during the Third Republic, in support of an anti-Jewish alliance. It presents on the obverse a scene of a Jew holding a money bag, who is cowering on the ground while a man with his foot on him is beating him with

a switch; a star above and a rising sun and church is seen in the background.

Above is written, translated from the French: “In France, the French.” The inscription below: “Always!! That Is Always the Enemy!!!”

We know the figure on the ground is a Jew because he is labeled LE JUIF (the Jew). (Interestingly the French word *juif* is defined in *The New Cassells French Dictionary* as a “grasping usurer”).

The reverse shows clasped hands from heaven in front of a globe surmounted by a cross. The inscription, loosely translated from the French, reads: “The Jewish People Stripped Us and Want to Enslave Us. So Let Us Unite Against Him and Especially Avoid

Continued



Dreyfus Affair: General Auguste Mercier. By J. Baffier, France, 1906, Bronze struck medal, 50 mm.
Image courtesy of William Rosenblum

Continued

Him; It Is Our Sacred Duty,” and below, “Anti-jewish Alliance.” Above is the legend, Garde a Vous! (Be on Guard!)

It is perhaps no coincidence that this anti- Semitic medal was issued at about the same period as that of the Dreyfus Affair of 1894.

Alfred Dreyfus was a French artillery officer of Jewish background, who was accused of conspiracy and espionage, and whose trial and conviction in 1894 on charges of treason became one of the most tense political dramas in modern French history.

Known today as the Dreyfus Affair, the incident was widely regarded as an anti-Semitic act perpetrated by the French military brass to protect one of its own members. Dreyfus was summarily convicted in a secret court martial, publicly stripped of his army rank, and sentenced to life imprisonment on Devil’s Island in French Guiana. Championed by leading

artists and intellectuals like Émile Zola, and after years in confinement, Dreyfus was finally released from prison in 1899, but it was not until 1906 that he was officially exonerated by a military commission and readmitted into the army.

However, when Dreyfus’ reinstatement came to a vote in parliament, General Auguste Mercier, who was minister of war when Dreyfus was arrested and was now a senator, refused to accept this, saying from the tribune that “I feel obliged to declare that the conviction I acquired in 1899 is in no way shaken. Consequently my conscience does not allow me ... to associate myself with the vote you will announce.”

Mercier immediately became a hero to the anti-Dreyfusard anti-Semites of l’Action Française. Further, the editor of their journal, Henri Vaugois, issued a call for a subscription for a gold medal in his honor. (See Dreyfus, 1906).

Continued



The Grand Sanhedrin of Napoleon by Alexis Depaulis and Nicholas Brenet, France, 1806, Silver struck medal, 41 mm (Friedenberg p. 40). Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht

Continued

Despite the imprisonment of Dreyfus based on false testimony, in 1906 a medal was issued in homage to General Auguste Mercier, the Minister of War who ordered and supported his conviction (shown on previous page).

The medal pays tribute to him in his role in sentencing Dreyfus, as it refers to the “Traitor Dreyfus” in the legend above his bust on the obverse, and on the reverse legend, repeats his words spoken at the tribune regarding his opposition to their reinstatement of Dreyfus: “My conviction gained by the debates of 1899 has in no way shaken my conscience and does not allow me to join you to vote and emit words pronounced by the senate July 18, 1906”.

A notable exception to the anti-Semitism exhibited in much of French history was a brief period during the time of Napo-

leon Bonaparte, who was one of the most prominent figures in the history of Jewish emancipation (although his actions were self-serving).

Needing Jewish soldiers, in 1806, Napoleon convened a meeting with Jewish notables (called the Grand Sanhedrin) for the purpose of relieving the Jews from their dietary laws, thus enabling them to serve in the French army.

In return the Jews received religious freedom and state protection in the French empire. This event was commemorated by the issuance of a medal shown above, the obverse of which shows a bust of Napoleon Bonaparte and the reverse a subservient Moses handing the Tablets of the Law to Napoleon.

RELIGIOUS BIGOTRY IN THE NEW WORLD

Religious persecution and big-

Continued



First Jewish Settlers in America, 1654, by Alex Shagin, USA, 1999. From the Jewish-American Hall of Fame series. Bronze struck medal, 49 x 47mm. Image courtesy Mel Wacks

Continued

otry were certainly not confined just to Europe. Indeed, early in the history of America, in some cases even before the colonies became the United States of America, several of the colonial states passed laws restricting the rights of individuals based on their religion. These strictures applied especially to Jews.

A small number of Jews, some of whom arrived in Boston in 1649, subsequently were given a stipend from the Puritans there on condition they leave and go back to Holland.

A few years later, in 1654, fearing the return of the Inquisition when Portugal took over the Dutch colony in Recife, Brazil, a group of Dutch Jewish settlers arrived in New Amsterdam (a Dutch settlement established at the southern tip of Manhattan Island, now part of New York City).

However, the Governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant, protested against the settlement of Jews, referring to them as “a deceitful race” and an “abominable religion” and “hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ,” who worshiped “the feet of Mammon.”

Nevertheless, the Jewish settlers prevailed and, largely through the efforts of Asser Levy and some members of the Dutch West India Company, established the first, albeit small, Jewish community in North America (Congregation Shearith Israel), an event commemorated by the issuance of a number of medals.

One shows on the obverse the settlers arriving in New Amsterdam, with the figure of Asser Levy with quill and rifle, shown above.

The reverse legend, expressing their hope, reads, “They Can Rest Protected from Tyranny and Op-

Continued



350 Years of Jewish Life in America by Dana Krinsky, USA, 2004. Bronze struck medal, 76 mm. Image courtesy Mel Wacks

Continued
pression Here.”

Another medal was issued to commemorate 350 years of Jewish life in America (shown above).

On the obverse a group of settlers, positioned in the shape of a ship’s prow, is seen coming to the American shores, represented by stars and stripes; the legend is the well-known biblical phrase from Leviticus (that is also inscribed on the Liberty Bell), “Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land,” inscribed in English and Hebrew.

On the reverse, below a stylized skyline of New York, the legend reads 350 YEARS OF JEWISH LIFE IN AMERICA 1654 [menorah logo] 2004.

Above the skyline is an extensive excerpt from George Washington’s letter sent in 1790 to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island (now the Touro

Synagogue), expressing his opposition to bigotry and persecution of the Jewish citizens.

It reads: “The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for giving to Mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection, should demean themselves as good citizens. May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit under his own vine and fig tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid.”

Fittingly, the last phrases are taken from the Old Testament of

Continued



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Unknown artist: USA, 1933, Bronze struck medal, 31 mm. This medal was issued by a Jewish organization in New York.

Image courtesy Ira Rezak

Continued
the Bible.

Although many of the early Jews settled in New York, by 1658, some, also seeking religious liberty, had arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, establishing a Jewish community there.

Some later settled in the colony of South Carolina. South Carolina was one of the most progressive of the original colonies, having as its charter, drawn up by John Locke in 1669, provisions which granted liberty of conscience to all settlers, expressly noting “Jews, heathens, and dissenters.”

By 1800 South Carolina had the largest Jewish population of any in the United States, mainly Sephardic Jews who had emigrated from Portugal and Spain.

Even though Jews were welcomed in some states in the newly-formed United States of America, there was still significant

intolerance toward them. In 1815, Secretary of State, James Monroe removed Mordecai Manuel Noah, the first Jew to have diplomatic status, from his position as US Consul in Tunis because he was Jewish; stating that, “the religion which you profess [is] an obstacle to the exercise of your consular functions.”

Noah protested this decision and in the process received backing from John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, who wrote letters supporting the separation of church and state and tolerance for Jews. During the Civil War, while some 7,000 Jews were serving as soldiers for the North, General Ulysses S. Grant issued an order reading, “The Jews as a class, violating every regulation of trade established by the Treasury Department, and also Departmental orders, are hereby expelled

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from the Department.” One month later, President Abraham Lincoln revoked the order (Johnson).

The twentieth century also provides instances of anti-Semitic bigotry as illustrated by historical medals. One such example of anti-Jewish propaganda is revealed by commentaries surrounding a medal issued in the United States in 1933 of the newly-elected President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

This medal, shown on previous page, while on its face is obviously not anti-Semitic, has been used to promote anti-Jewish invectives.

On the obverse is an image of President Roosevelt with the flag of the United States and the American Eagle. On the reverse can be seen a star of David with the Hebrew inscription within the star translated as “Good Luck.” The star is surrounded by the legend HEALTH. WEALTH. PROSPERITY.

In 1936, the notorious anti-Semite and Nazi propagandist, Robert Edward Edmondson, twisted the meaning of this medal in an article he wrote titled: “*Moe” Roosevelt Wins a Six-Point Solomon Star Medal*. He used the medal, claiming it as evidence, in his view, of the inordinate influence Jews had on the Roosevelt administration, publishing his interpretation of the reverse inscription to mean: “Good Luck and Wisdom to Franklin D. Roosevelt, our Modern Moses, Leading Jewry in “The Promised

Land” (America) under the “Seal of Solomon”.”

He referred to the Star of David on the medal as the “Solomon Star,” the “synagogue symbol of possession and world power.” Edmondson published numerous other anti-Jewish tracts, writing among other things, that Roosevelt was of Jewish ancestry as if this in itself was an indictment of him “being a descendant of Claes Martenssen van Roosevelt of The Netherlands,” whom Edmondson referred to as “Rosenvelt.”

Citing this medal and other material mentioned in the article, Edmondson concludes with: “This evidence merely adds more indisputable proof that the Roosevelt Communistic Administration is dominated by “Invisible Jewish Leadership”.”

Edmondson was eventually tried for sedition in what became known as The Great Sedition Trial of 1944. Though the trial ended in a mistrial, Edmondson is widely believed by U.S. intelligence to have been an agent for Nazi Germany.

Religious and racial bigotry in America was directed not only toward Jews but to other groups as well. North Carolina denied public office to all non-Protestants. Maryland banned non-Christians from holding public office or practicing law. Pennsylvania had laws preventing many business activities on the “Lord’s Day,” i.e. on

Continued

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Sunday. These laws were passed despite the fact that much of the migration from Europe to North America in the seventeenth century took place because people were looking for more religious freedom. The Puritans and Pilgrims, for example, settled in the New World at least in part to pursue their own religious doctrines unfettered. Nevertheless, they showed marked hostility to other faiths. So much so that several religious groups were forced to establish their own doctrinal enclaves elsewhere. Many Baptists settled in Rhode Island and later moved to South Carolina, Quakers and Lutherans to Pennsylvania, Roman Catholics to Maryland, Anglicans to Virginia and Mormons ultimately to Utah. In most cases, the new settlers in turn forced out the established native nations of American Indians, who had been living there for centuries (Weiss, 2012, 2013). The enormity of the issue of enslavement of African Americans deserves a treatise of its own.

Some individuals of the period stand out as champions of religious liberty. Roger Williams, an early proponent for the separation of church and state, found he was unwelcome in the Massachusetts Colony because of his liberal religious beliefs. In 1636, he founded the Colony of Rhode Island where a number of non-Puritan colonists

as well as others who believed in religious freedom joined him. His progressive attitudes regarding religious tolerance extended to Jews as well, for in 1658, the small colony of Newport, Rhode Island received its first Jewish residents, a group of fifteen families who emigrated from Barbados, where a Sephardi Jewish community had existed since the 1620s. Upon their arrival they formalized a new congregation in Newport (the second oldest Jewish congregation in America) calling themselves “Yeshuat Israel.”

William Penn, a Quaker who supported peaceful relations with the Native American Indians (shown above), was also a leader in the fight for religious liberty. He and his agents encouraged German emigration to Pennsylvania by circulating promotional literature touting the economic advantages of Pennsylvania as well as the religious liberty available there.

Largely because of his liberal beliefs, many different religious groups settled in Pennsylvania, the state which he founded and which bears his name. The legend on the medal “By Deeds of Peace” was Penn’s favorite motto.

MEDALS OF TOLERATION

Not all medals were made to denigrate the Jews. Some were issued to support or encourage toleration. (One of these has already been considered elsewhere: *Re-*

Continued



Beer Medal: End of the Persecution of Jews During the Pontificate of Julius II by unknown medallist, 1503, Bronze hollow cast medal, 166 mm (Armand II, 142,16; Friedenberg p.72). Benjamin Beer was the son of a famous Jewish doctor of the 15th century.

Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht

Continued
peal of Edict Expelling Jews from Prague, on Page 11.).

One produced in 1503 commemorates the end of the persecution of Jews during the pontificate of Julius II in the 16th century. It is a uniface, hollow cast medal, depicted above, showing a bust of a figure thought to be that of Benjamin Beer, the son of the physician Elijah ben Sabbetai Beer, but because of the date of the medal, this has been questioned. To get around this difficulty, it has been suggested that the date may not indicate the time of issuance of the piece but rather the future time when Benjamin Beer assumed the Messiah would come, but this issue remains unclear. (See Friedenberg).

Friedenberg has devoted several pages to this enigmatic medal. His overall conclusion is that it re-

flects the state of mind of the Jews in that period (the medal's date, M.III.D., can be interpreted either as 1497 or 1503).

The Jews had had a disastrous 200 or so years, having been expelled from France in 1306, massacred in Germany in the mid-1300s and finally subjected to every type of discrimination, humiliation and torture in Spain, beginning in 1391 and culminating in the Inquisition starting in 1478, with all of its impending cataclysms for the Jews.

The legend may be interpreted as an expectation, or at least hope, for the coming of the Messiah. It has been translated from the Hebrew in various ways, that in Friedenberg being, "*By the Decree of Him Who Is the Guide of the Universe, Blessed Be He, by His Eternal Will. When All Justice*

Continued

Continued

Ceased and Consideration Failed, I Beheld the Length of That Period Reaching the Appointed End of Exile; but Reflecting on the Ways of Providence, as by Eli Romi the Spiritual Traces of Them Yet Remain (then) I Rejoiced and I Fully Hope in the Redemption, Oh Eternal, Omnipotent God Who Art Great and Forgiving.”

On the reverse edge, in Latin, is translated as, “After the Darkness, I Hope for Light” (from the Vulgate version of *Job 17:12*) and “The Last Day Is the Judge of Happiness 1503.”

The description of this medal in the Busso Peus-Nacht. auction catalog also states that it represents the end of the persecution of Jews during the 16th century. Given what they have gone through up to this period, such an interpretation has some validity. They also point out other interpretations, however, in that it may actually be a mockery medal ridiculing the end-time prophets. It is noteworthy that this medal predates by about one century that of Shabbatai Tzvi, a person who had messianic leanings and about whom a medal was issued (shown in Part I).

Empress Maria Teresa of Austria, while intolerant toward anyone not Roman Catholic, had a special animosity toward Jews and was considered to be the most anti-Semitic monarch of her time.

During her reign, she proposed

expelling all the Jews from her hereditary dominions, and in 1777 she wrote of the Jews: “I know of no greater plague than this race, which on account of its deceit, usury and avarice is driving my subjects into beggary. Therefore as far as possible, the Jews are to be kept away and avoided.”

Her son Joseph II, who followed her as Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, did not share these bigoted views, and in 1781 granted religious toleration to Protestants and partial toleration to Jews (Patent of Toleration, enacted in 1781) and a year later extended full religious freedom to the Jewish population (Edict of Tolerance).

These edicts were celebrated by the striking of medals commemorating his historic acts.

One of these medals, shown on the next page, depicts on the obverse a bust of Joseph II with the legend reading “Love and Happiness of Mankind.” The reverse legend translates as: “The One Who Commands that All Live Fully.”

A child stands before a base on which is inscribed: “Freedom of Worship Was Given by Joseph II to Protestants and Jews in His Empire in 1781.” (Although some additional guarantees were given to Jews at that time, their full civil rights were not established until 1782). A medal with a similar theme was issued in 1782 by Dutch Jews to commemorate the

Continued



ABOVE: Edict of Emancipation by Johann Leonhard Oexlein. Holy Roman Empire, Archduchy of Austria, 1781, Silver struck medal, 45 mm. Ref: Friedenberg p. 36. Image courtesy Tradart

BELOW: Religious Freedom Granted to Jews and Protestants. by Johann Christian Reich. Pewter struck, 1782, Germany, 44 mm. (Friedenberg p. 37). Image courtesy Busso Peus Nacht



Continued
directives of the Catholic Emperor Joseph II of the Holy Roman Empire, granting religious liberties to Protestants and Jews.

On the obverse is a bust of Joseph II, with an inscription reading, "Toleration Ordered." The reverse shows a radiant triangle (representing the Holy Trinity) over a crowned eagle, which holds a banner ("In God's Name"), protecting three figures (a Bishop, Pastor and Rabbi), representing

the Catholic, Protestant and Jewish religious faiths, respectively. The legend above the eagle reads "Under its Wings, it Protects Everyone," and below "These Friends 1782."

Ironically, this medal was engraved by Johann Christian Reich, the same medallist who made the notorious anti-Semitic Korn Jude Medals of the 1770s. ▢

END PART II

SCUBA DIVERS DISCOVER LARGEST GOLD COIN CACHE FOUND IN ISRAEL

An amateur scuba diving club recently unearthed the biggest trove of gold coins ever found in Israel. The stash was revealed after winter storms shifted the sands off the coast of Caesarea in Israel.



Some of the 2,000 gold coins of the Fatimids found off the coast of the ancient city of Caesarea.

The coins are about 1,000-years old, and were minted by the Fatimid Caliphate, which ruled much of North Africa and the Mediterranean at the time.

The coins were found in Caesarea National Park, an archeological heritage site that preserves the remains of the ancient city of Caesarea. Caesarea was a harbor city founded by King Herod the Great about 2,000 years ago.

At the time the coins were minted, the city was a bustling, prosperous port that played an important role in the Fatimid's trading network.

The antiquities authority soon found a huge trove of gold coins, the largest ever unearthed in Israel. All told, about 2,000 gold coins were discovered under the ocean.

Despite spending a millenium in the harsh saltwater environment, the coins were in pristine condition and needed no refurbishing or conservation work. That's because gold, as a noble metal, does not react with air or water.

The gold coins were minted by caliphs who ruled the Fatimid Kingdom, which spanned much of North Africa and the Mediterranean.

The earliest coin in the trove was minted in Sicily in the ninth century, though most were minted by the caliphs Al Hakim and Al Zahir, who ruled between 996 C.E. and 1031 C.E.

Some of the same types of coins were circulating decades later, when Crusaders conquered Jerusalem in 1099. ▢

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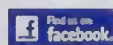
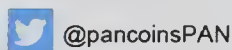
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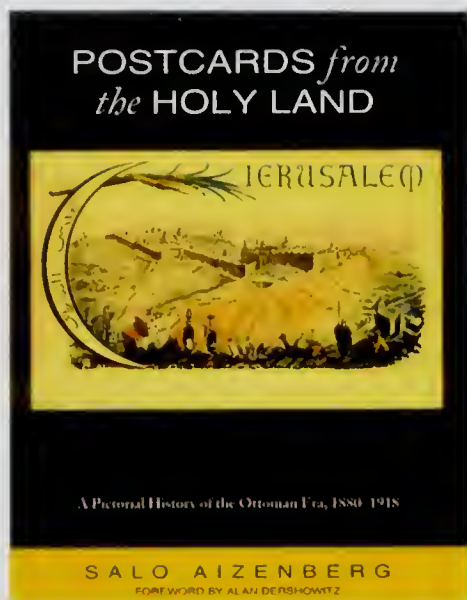
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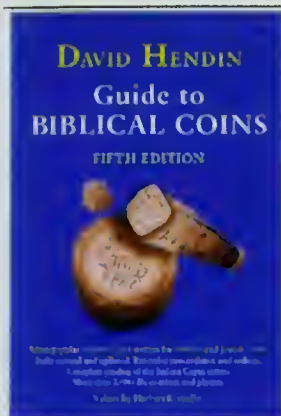
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JOSHUA BEN GAMLA'S BRIBE

BY
MARVIN TAMEANKO

The Talmud, in *Bava Bathra 21a*, instructs us to always remember Joshua ben Gamla because he prevented the Torah from being forgotten. He did this by establishing schools for children, older than five years, in every Judaeen town when he was the High Priest in Jerusalem. Coin collectors were already familiar with ben Gamla because, when searching the Talmud for references to ancient coins, they found mentions of him in *Yevamos 61a* and in *Yoma 18a*. These chapters reported that he had married a wealthy widow named Martha, a daughter of the High Priestly family of Boethus, and that she bribed “Yannai,” that is King Alexander Jannaeus, whose Hebrew name was Yehonatan, nick-



Martha bat Boethus, wife of Joshua ben Gamla, bringing the bribe to the court of King Alexander Jannaeus in Jerusalem.

named Yannai, 104-76 BCE, with a half-se’a (seah) of dinars to secure the position of High Priest for her husband.

This is an interesting story but,

Continued

Continued

despite being recorded in the authoritative Talmud, it is false and does not agree with the facts in Jewish history. No man named Joshua Ben Gamla was ever a High Priest in Judaea. A Joshua ben Gamaliel is listed in the official records of the High Priests but the Jewish/Roman historian, Josephus, in his book the *Antiquities of the Jews* 20.9:4, said that ben Gamaliel held this office in 64 CE, not 150 years earlier in 104-76 BCE.

In addition, according to the *Midrash*, the ancient homiletic stories told by rabbinic sages, his wife's name was Miriam, not Martha. Also, the 'half-se'a' mentioned in the Talmud as the size of the bribe, was a liquid or dry ewight, usually describing a vessel holding about seven quarts (7.3 litres), and it was never used to measure coins. Furthermore, the 'dinars,' mentioned as the coins in the bribe were Roman coins, called denarii (singular, denarius) and these coins rarely circulated in Judaea during Alexander Jannaeus' reign.

The Romans were not yet the dominant power in the Middle East at that time and the silver coins used in the region would have been minted in Ptolemaic Egypt or Seleukid Syria, the two nations that



An imaginative illustration of the High Priest of Judaea.

had recently ruled Judaea.

Finally, the Hasmonean kings (Maccabees) had banished the High Priests in 142 BCE because they became corrupt and had cooperated with the Syrian conquerors. The Hasmoneans then appointed themselves as the High Priests and engraved their coins with the title, "the High Priest and Council of the Jews." It is doubtful that Alexander Jannaeus would give away this prestigious and influential office, even for a large bribe.

To explain away these historical discrepancies, scholars suggested that the editors of the Talmud, working between 200 and 400 CE,

Continued

Continued

practised a form of the Roman act of denigration called ‘Damnatio Memoriae.’

This “damnation of memory,” was inflicted on an individual who had brought shame on the nation and was done by erasing his name in documents, by destroying his statues, and by obliterating his portrait and inscriptions on coins.

Apparently, the editors of the Talmud adopted this Roman custom and tried to remove ben Gamaliel from the pages of history by mispronouncing his name as Gamla, perhaps an insulting diminutive, by falsely recording the events of his life, and by changing the dates of his existence.

In fact, the editors of the Talmud considered all the High Priests of the 1st century CE, leading up to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, to be wicked and traitorous because they collaborated with evil rulers or sought personal gain from their office.

Jerusalem at that time was a hotbed of political and religious conflict where several factions fought each other over control of the government and the Temple rituals.

In the midst of all this was Rome trying to control the country and prevent rebellion. Josephus, a

Jewish aristocrat and general, was regarded as a traitor because he defected to the Romans during the First Revolt in 66 CE but, with all his faults, he may have truthfully recorded the events of those decades. His account of the life of Joshua ben Gamaliel in his books, *Antiquities of the Jews*, and *The Jewish War*, was probably accurate, even if he dramatically exaggerated some events.

It is clear that the Talmud had no love for the High Priest, ben Gamaliel, nor his sponsor, the Herodian king of Judaea, Agrippa II, 49-95 CE. This king was a staunch ally of the Romans and supported them against his own people.

In the First Revolt of the Jews against Rome, in 66-70 CE, Agrippa sent 2,000 of his cavalry troops to assist the Romans attacking Jerusalem. The records show that sometime in 64 CE Agrippa appointed his political ally, Joshua ben Gamaliel, as the High Priest in Jerusalem. After the Hasmoneans were deposed, the Romans had given the Herodian kings the right to appoint the High Priests and they turned this position into a political office and a source of income through bribery.

Agrippa and ben Gamaliel belonged to the Peace Party that

‘JERUSALEM AT THE TIME WAS A HOTBED OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT’

Continued



A denarius of Claudius struck in Rome in 50-54 CE, showing his and Nero's heads. The Roman Imperial Coinage, cited as RIC, Vol I, 83.

Photo courtesy the Classical Numismatic Group, www.cngcoins.com

Continued

cooperated with the Romans and fought against the other political sects who demanded rebellion. Long after the resulting revolt, and seeing the death and destruction it caused, the editors of the Talmud blamed ben Gamaliel and other high officials for the Roman victory. To damn his memory and to belittle his reputation, the editors accused him of bribing the king for his office.

Ironically, despite ben Gamaliel's faithful service to Agrippa, he was replaced after only one year in office by Matthias ben Theophil, (*Antiquities of the Jews* xx.9:7), who perhaps offered a larger bribe to the king.

Bribery to obtain high office was a common practice in Judaea at that time so this allegation may be the only true element in the Talmud's account of ben Gamaliel's life.

However, if his wife, Miriam, did give Agrippa a bribe of a half-se'a

of Roman denarii in 64 CE, she would have needed about 2,800 coins to fill the pot.

The Talmud tells us in *Bava Bathra* that a single denarius was the daily wages of a farm labourer in Judaea at that time, so Miriam's bribe was equal to almost eight year's salary for a worker, an enormous sum even today. As Agrippa struck no silver denominations, Miriam would have to gather the Roman denarii circulating in Judaea to make up the bribe. And as the bribe was a special gift to royalty, it had to look substantial and handsome, so Miriam would have chosen the best, newest, full-weight, coins, coming out of the Roman mints in the years just before 64 CE. These would have been issued by the emperors Claudius, 41-54 CE, and Nero, 54-68 CE.

Agrippa II, as a youth, had been a hostage in Rome and was befriended by Claudius who, when he became emperor, made Agrippa

Continued



A denarius struck by Nero in Lugdunum (Lyon, Gaul) after 54 CE to commemorate the deification of Claudius by showing his funeral cart. RIC Vol. I, 5.

Photo courtesy CNG.

Continued

the king of Judaea. Knowing this fact, Miriam may have picked out as many coins showing the bust of Claudius as she could find. This would have pleased Agrippa who owed a great debt to his close friend. A typical, fine denarius of Claudius, struck in Rome in 50-54 CE, showed his head and the bust of his eventual successor, the young Nero, who would rule Rome in 64 CE, the year ben Gamaliel became the High Priest.

Undoubtedly, Miriam would have had her servants collect many of these denarii from local money-changers to include in the bribe.

With so many denarii needed for the bribe, we may assume that numerous design types were represented in the accumulation. Certainly, the special denarii newly minted by Nero to celebrate the deification of his predecessor, Claudius,

would have been very desirable to include in the bribe. These would have pleased Agrippa because they honored his friend by showing the ceremonial cart that carried the deceased emperor to his funeral pyre.

It is very likely that Agrippa himself attended this funeral in Rome to pay his respects to his generous patron, and he would have cherished these coins as a memento of the occasion.

In speculation, another coin that would have been appropriate in the bribe was a denarius minted by Nero just before ben Gamaliel was appointed High Priest in 64 CE. These coins, recently imported into Judaea, would have been prize specimens, shiny, full weight and undamaged by handling.

It was customary for Romans to save these kind of mint-state coins and give them as gifts to friends on special occasions such as birth-

Continued



A denarius of Nero struck in Lugdunum in 60-61 CE showing the goddess Roma. RIC Vol. I, Nero 128.

Photo courtesy CNG

Continued

days or New Year's celebrations. Roman money-changers called these coins "nummi asperi," that is "sharp coins" in Latin, and sold them at a premium over their face value. These coins showed the bust of Nero on the obverse and also the national goddess Roma on the reverse. The image of this deity on the coins would have appealed to Agrippa, a fully Romanized Jew, who had probably adopted many Roman customs, including reverence for their deities.

In *The War of the Jews*, Book iv, 5:2, Josephus called ben Gamaliel by his Greek name, Jesus, instead of Joshua, and reported that, after he was deposed as High Priest, he became one of the leaders of the Peace Party in Jerusalem, working to accommodate Roman rule.

Ben Gamaliel tried to stop the Zealots and other pugnacious sects from terrorizing the citizens, murdering dissidents, and destroying

the buildings of Jerusalem. But he failed and was captured by his enemies and executed as a traitor just before the Roman attack on the city in 66 CE.

This shameful ending to his life sullied his reputation with the editors of the Talmud and, despite his good work in educating the common people, he was despised and disparaged.

In a *Damnatio Memoriae*, his real name was changed to Gamla, to disguise him and obliterate him from the records. To diminish his stature, his wife was accused of bribing the king for his office. Then he was relocated to an earlier period in time to conceal him from historians and his countrymen, and to be forgotten by scholars.

The worst malediction in the Jewish tradition is to say, "may his name be blotted out from memory." And the editors of the Talmud laid this curse on the head of Joshua ben Gamaliel. □

MODERN MEDAL HONORS ANCIENT JEWISH CITY



The Tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs in Hebron, Israel.

BY ROBERT MESSING, A.I.N.A. LIFE MEMBER 38

Of all the cities in Israel, Hebron is one of the most significant. It is home to the world's oldest Jewish site. Moses sent spies to visit it. Joshua captured it. It was King David's residence for seven years. To honor this special city, the Jewish community of Hebron has issued a medal in both silver and bronze. They are described at the end of this article.

Hebron, located in the Judean hills, south of Jerusalem, is the site of the first purchase of land in Israel by a Jew. This purchase was made by

the patriarch Abraham. His wife of many years, Sarah, who was living in Hebron, had just died. Abraham needed a place to bury her. He went to Ephron the Hittite and asked him if he could buy from him the cave of Machpelah. The transaction is recorded in the Bible, in the book of *Genesis (Bereishit) Chapter 23, verses 14 – 17.*

14) And Ephron replied to Abraham, saying to him,

15) "My lord, listen to me; a [piece of] land worth four hundred shekels

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of silver, what is it between me and you? Bury your dead."

16) And Abraham listened to Ephron, and Abraham weighed out to Ephron the silver that he had named in the hearing of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, accepted by the merchant.

17) And so the field of Ephron which was in Machpelah, facing Mamre, was established (as Abraham's possession). [This included] the field and the cave that was in it, and all the trees that were in the field, which were within its entire border around.

Abraham buried Sarah in the cave of Machpelah.

When Abraham died, he was buried

in that same cave. So, too, was Abraham's son, Isaac, and his wife Rebecca, and Abraham's grandson, Jacob, and his wife Leah. The cave is also known as the Tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.

It is interesting to note that in this sales transaction, Abraham did not pay Ephron with local currency. The reason was that in Abraham's time coins had not yet been invented. In Abraham's time, commercial transactions were carried out by the merchant telling the buyer how many standard weights (shekels in Hebrew) of a precious metal like gold or silver an item cost.

If the buyer agreed to the price,

a merchant would put that many standard weights on one side of a balance scale and the buyer would put the silver or gold on the other side of the scale. When both sides of the scale were in balance, the sale could be consummated. A potential problem was that the merchant could use weights that were heavier than they should be. In that case, the buyer ended up giving the merchant more of the precious metal than was called for. In other words, the buyer was tricked into overpaying.



Because false weights could be such a problem, the Bible addresses this issue directly in not one but two places. In *Leviticus (Vayikrah) 19:35-36*, it says:

35) You shall not commit a perversion of justice with measures, weights, or liquid measures.

36) You shall have true scales, true weights, a true ephah, and a true hin. I am the Lord, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

In *Deuteronomy (Devarim) 25:15* it says:

15) [Rather,] you shall have a full and honest weight, [and] a full and honest ephah measure, in order that your days will be prolonged on the land which the Lord, your God, gives you.

The name Hebron is thought to de-

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rive from the Hebrew word “chaver” which means “friend” and refers to Abraham. Hebron is also known as Kiryath-Arba. *Genesis (Bereishit) 23:2*. Hebron is mentioned more than forty times in the Bible. The following are some of the references:

When the Jews were traveling for forty years in the wilderness after they left Egypt, Moses sent 12 spies into Israel to see what the Promised Land was like. Hebron was one of the places they visited. *Numbers (Bamidbar) 13:22*.

After Moses died, the Jews entered the Promised Land under the leadership of Joshua. Among the places that Joshua captured was Hebron, and he gave Hebron to Caleb, one of the 12 spies. *Joshua (Yehoshua) 14:13*.

Hebron was designated as one of the cities of refuge in the land of Israel. *Joshua (Yehoshua) 20:7*. (A city of refuge was a place that anyone who kills a person accidentally and unintentionally was able to flee to and be protected from the wrath of the relatives and friends of the person that he killed.)

When David became king of Judah, Hebron was his royal residence for seven years. *2 Samuel (Shemuel) 5:5*

Following the Biblical period, Hebron remained significant in Jewish history:

Hebron was incorporated into the Jewish Hasmonean (Maccabean) kingdom by John Hyrcanus, the nephew of Judah Maccabee. He reigned from 135 to 104 BCE.

King Herod built the 12-meter high wall which is the base of the present structure over the Tomb of the Patriarch, during his reign of 37 to 4 BCE.

Hebron was the scene of extensive fighting during revolt against Rome (66 to 70 CE) which ended with the destruction of the Second Temple. One thousand years later, there are reports of people entering into the actual cave where the forefathers were buried. Towards the end of the period of Crusader rule, in 1166, Maimonides (also known as Rambam), one of the most widely studied Jewish scholars, visited Hebron and wrote,

‘On Sunday, 9 Marheshvan (17 October), I left Jerusalem for Hebron to kiss the tombs of my ancestors in the Cave. On that day, I stood in the cave and prayed, praise be to God, (in gratitude) for everything’.

In 1170, Benjamin of Tudela (a medieval Jewish traveler who visited Europe, Asia, and Africa) went to Hebron, which he called by its Frankish name, *St. Abram de Bron*. He reported:

“Here there is the great church called St. Abram, and this was a Jewish place of worship at the time of the Mohammedan rule, but the Gentiles have erected there six tombs, respectively called those of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah.

“The custodians tell the pilgrims that these are the tombs of the Patriarchs, for which information the pilgrims give them money. If a Jew

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Three teenagers, Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaar and Eyal Yifrach, were abducted and slain from Hebron by terrorists in June 2014.

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comes, however, and gives a special reward, the custodian of the cave opens unto him a gate of iron, which was constructed by our forefathers, and then he is able to descend below by means of steps, holding a lighted candle in his hand.

“He then reaches a cave, in which nothing is to be found, and a cave beyond, which is likewise empty, but when he reaches the third cave behold there are six sepulchers, those of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, respectively facing those of Sarah, Rebekah and Leah.”

In modern times, Jews living in Hebron have known their share of sorrows. In August, 1929, local Arabs perpetrated a well-organized pogrom. According to the Encyclopedia Judaica, “Sixty seven men, women and children were killed, sixty were injured, the community was destroyed, synagogues were razed and Torah scrolls were burned.”

Following the creation of the State

of Israel, in the 1948 War of Independence, Hebron was captured and occupied the Jordanian Arab League. During the Jordanian occupation, Jews were not permitted to live in the city nor, despite the Armistice Agreement, to visit or pray at the Jewish holy sites in the city.

Additionally, the Jordanian authorities and local residents undertook a systematic campaign to eliminate any evidence of the Jewish presence in the city. They razed the Jewish quarter, desecrated the Jewish cemetery and built an animal pen on the ruins of the Avraham Avinu Synagogue. Jews returned to Hebron following the Six Day War in 1967.

Most recently, in June, 2014, three Israeli teenagers, Naftali Fraenkel, Gilad Shaar and Eyal Yifrach were abducted and murdered by Hamas terrorists. This led to the start of the latest war in Gaza.

Today, over 900 Jews live in Hebron and 8,000 Jews live in the

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The Hebron medal, issued by the Jewish community of Hebron, has been minted both in silver and copper/bronze. Purchase supports the community.

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 adjacent community of Kiryat Arba. Also some 160,000 Arabs live in Hebron.

A few years ago, I visited Hebron. As I walked around the city, what impressed me was how the small Jewish community at the bottom of the valley, was surrounded by the much more numerous Palestinians, living on the heights above them. To me it seemed that this geographic situation was quite dangerous and potentially explosive. But in talking to Jewish residents living there, there was no fear. These people felt that it was important that there had to be a continuing Jewish presence in this holy and historic place.

The Hebron medal, issued by the Jewish community of Hebron has been minted both in silver and copper/bronze. One side of the medal shows the Tomb of the Patriarchs as it looks today. Printed in English are the words “Tomb of the Patriarchs” and “The Jewish City of Hebron.”

Printed in Hebrew are the words “Restoration of the Jewish Community of Hebron’ and “The cave of Machpelah, first land holding in the Land of Israel.” On the other side there is the number “400” and the words “silver shekels” in Hebrew and English.

Also in Hebrew and English, around the circumference of the medal, is the quote from *Genesis (Bereishit) 23:17*, “And the title to the field and the cave in it was made over to Abraham.”

The rim of the silver medal is reeded and has the words “999 fine silver.” The diameter of the medal is 2 inches. The silver medal weighs 2.8 ounces.

The silver medal can be acquired by a \$1,000 contribution and the copper/bronze medal can be acquired for a contribution of \$500. (If you state that you saw this article in *The Shekel*, the contribution is \$400.) The web site to acquire the medals is www.hebronfund.org.☛

THE BENEFICIENT ISRAELITE MEDAL



The "Beneficient Israelite" bronze medal is 71mm high x 48mm wide, and weighs 80.2 gm.

In 1920, the award medal of "The Beneficient Isrealite" Charity was presented to Raphael Georges Levy (a noted Jewish educator, banker, economist and politician).

The obverse features Benevolence-France by a tree, her arm resting on shield with motto MOTHERLAND, BROTHERHOOD, CHARITY; her other hand is atop a fasces, with inscription below: "LA BIENFAISANTE ISRAELITE."

The reverse contains an inscription in three lines: "LA BIENFAISANTE ISRAELITE / FONDÉE EN 1843," with an engraved inscription below: TEMOIGNAGE DE RECONNAISSANCE (Testimony of Recognition)/A MR. RAPHAEL GEORGES LÉVY/28 NOVEMBRE 1920 (the same year in

which he was elected to the French Senate!).

The La Bienfaisante Israélite (the Beneficient Isrealite) was founded in 1843 with the main purpose of supporting unmarried men and apprentices, but also to organize social gatherings.

Another purpose of the society was to protect all members of the Jewish community in case of need, and it also played an important role in the wider Jewish world as it provided direct financial support to Jewish families in the Alsace as well as in Palestine.

The medal was designed by sculptor Emmanuel Hannaux (born 1855), a native of Metz in French Switzerland, who specialized in Jewish-related subjects. □

ISRAEL'S 2015 BULLION COIN HONORS MUSEUM



The 2015 issue of the “Jerusalem of Gold” bullion coin series is dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Israel Museum. Struck in .9999 fine gold, the one ounce coins are limited to a mintage of 3,600.

The Bank of Israel has dedicated the sixth Israeli Bullion Coin in the “Jerusalem of Gold” series, to the 50th Anniversary of the Israel Museum. Each coin is minted in Brilliant Uncirculated quality, containing exactly 1 troy oz. of 99.99 percentpure gold; mintage is limited to 3,600 pieces. These can be purchased on www.israelmint.com for about 20 percent over the spot price of gold.

The Israel Museum, located in Jerusalem, is the largest cultural institution in the State of Israel, and is ranked among the world’s leading art and archaeology museums.

Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections, including works dating from pre-

history to the present day, in its Archaeology, Fine Arts, and Jewish Art and Life Wings.

The most extensive holdings of biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world are featured at the Israel Museum. Over 50 years, the Museum has grown significantly and has built up an extensive and varied collection which includes about half a million items, reflecting a wide spectrum of culture.

The Museum buildings, which have become an important part of the Jerusalem landscape, were planned by architect Alfred Mansfeld and designer Dora Gad.

Together, they are designed to resemble, in modular modernism, a growing Mediterranean village. □

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THE SHOFAR AND JEWISH IDENTITY



BY CANTOR JONATHAN L. FRIEDMANN, PH.D.

The shofar is the only musical instrument that has survived in Jewish practice since ancient times. Other types of biblical instruments (harps, lyres, frame drums, flutes, rattles, cymbals, etc.) are notoriously difficult to identify, both because the text reveals little about how they looked or sounded, and because they were silenced after the destruction of the Second Temple and the subsequent unemployment of the Levitical orchestra.

A few archaeologists and instrument

A 1967 Bar Kokhba-Beitar Fortress medal by Paul Vincze depicts an ancient Jewish trumpeter blowing the shofar. A tetradrachm of Bar Kokhba also is depicted.

Image courtesy Stack's

makers have attempted the speculative (and controversial) work of reconstructing these long-lost devices. But such labors are not needed when it comes to the shofar.

Two factors account for the shofar's remarkable preservation.

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A Bar Kokhba denarius issued in 134/5 CE features a pair of shofars surrounded by the ancient Hebrew inscription "For the freedom of Jerusalem."

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First, it is a biological instrument. Unlike human-made objects, which are influenced by technological changes and cultural evolution, the undetectably slow forces of nature set the dimensions of the shofar.

According to the Talmud, a shofar could be fashioned from the horns of five animals: sheep, goats, mountain goats, antelopes, and gazelles (RH 27a). And any modification that interferes with its natural sound, such as a mouthpiece or finger holes, would disqualify it from use.

These specifications, which evidently carried over from biblical times, have ensured the shofar's stable shape and sound.

The second factor is a bit more nuanced. Musical instruments were forbidden in early synagogues during holy days. The rabbis' reasoning was twofold: to avoid fixing an instrument that becomes damaged, a prohibited form of work (Beitzah 36b), and to mourn the loss of the Jerusalem Temple, where

instruments were played in abundance (Gittin 7a). However, this prohibition did not extend to the shofar, which the rabbis felt was not musical enough to be considered a musical instrument.

The exclusion of the shofar from the family of instruments had a double motivation: one part aesthetic, and one part pragmatic. The aesthetic position derived from the horn's limited facilities and utilitarian purposes.

Outside of virtuosic performances, the shofar is incapable of producing a sequence of clear tones, let alone a melody. Its range of two or three ragged pitches is not musical *per se*, although it is technically an aerophone (wind instrument). It was used more as a tool than as a source of pleasure.

This is evident from accounts of Temple ceremonies, where other instruments were played together and accompanied singing, while the shofar was played alone (or along with another signal trumpet, the *chatsotsrah*).

The shofar is cited between 69 and 74

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The blowing of the shofar is shown on a Rosh Hashanah medal issued by the Israel Government Coins and Medals corporation, top right; and on a privately issued Israel medal commemorating the 1973 Yom Kippur War, bottom left.

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times in the Hebrew Bible, depending on who is counting. Its blasts were heard in a variety of sacred and secular contexts, including the revelation at Sinai (*Exod.* 19:16-19, 20:15), on the battlefield (e.g., *Jgs.* 7:16-22; *2 Sam.* 2:28), for the coronation of kings (*1 Kgs.* 1:34; *2 Kgs.* 9:13), and during sacred days (e.g., *Lev.* 23:24; *Num.* 29:1; *Ps.* 81:4).

Rabbinic literature further describes the shofar marking a death (MK 27b), signaling fast days (Ta'an. 1:6), announcing excommunications (MK 16a), and sounding a six-blast sequence to inaugurate Shabbat - blast one: laborers stopped their work; blast two: shops

were closed; blast three: candles were lit; blasts four, five, six: Shabbat was formally greeted (Shab. 35b).

The rabbis did not view any of these as musical moments. Rather, they were communal events that required the attention of all within earshot of the non-tempered horn. Unlike the beautifying effect of music proper, the shofar functioned as a solemn and disconcerting alarm.

On a pragmatic level, the rabbis did not want to interfere with the shofar's national-cultic value.

According to the Torah, the first day of the seventh month (Rosh Hashanah) was a day for blowing shofars (*Lev.* 23:24;

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A seventh-century gold Byzantine medal depicts a shofar, a seven-branched menorah and a Torah scroll.

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Num. 29:1).

The only other Torah-mandated action for that day was ritual sacrifice, which ended with the fall of the Second Temple.

As such, grouping the shofar with musical instruments, and thus barring it from New Year observances, would have eliminated the holiday's scriptural basis.

The same problem would have arisen on the tenth day of the seventh month (Yom Kippur), which was likewise mandated as a day for horn blasts (*Lev. 25:9*).

Perhaps more important was the shofar's status as a national symbol. This is attested in the earliest artistic representations of the horn.

From at least the Roman period, the shofar was revered as a badge of Jewish self-identification. It was woven into architectonic elements, such as the capitals, stone reliefs, and mosaic floors of synagogues, as well as smaller artifacts, such as oil lamps, medallions, and coins.

More often than not, it appeared as part

of a symbolic grouping, which typically included a menorah, a machta (incense shovel), and/or a lulav and etrog. An example is a gold Byzantine medal (seventh century C.E.), which depicts a shofar, a seven-branched menorah, and a Torah scroll.

These representations suggest that the shofar was not restricted in its function or meaning, but was a multivalent ethnic identity marker. It was, in short, an object too meaningful to oppose.

The rabbis had ideologically coherent reasons for excluding the shofar from the musical realm. Aesthetically, its limited sounds and utilitarian purposes fell short of their musical expectations. Pragmatically, its centrality to High Holiday worship and national consciousness saved it from the fate of other biblical instruments.

As a result, the shofar has remained a constant presence in Jewish thought and practice, and is among the few steady links to the material culture of ancient Israel. □

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